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SUBJECT: FM ZEBARI UPDATES DAS GODEC ON REGIONAL RELATIONS

Classified By: Political Counselor Robert S. Ford for
reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

¶1. (C) In a February 6 meeting, Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari told DAS Robert Godec and PolCouns that several ambassadorial assignments await the PM's approval. "We are all like planes in a holding pattern waiting to land," commented Deputy Foreign Minister for Bilateral Relations Hamid al-Bayati. Al-Bayati said that he has been waiting for Iraq's UN Ambassador Samir Sumaidaie to transfer to Washington, DC so that al-Bayati can get PM Jafari's OK to move to New York and take his place at the UN. Zebari added that Cairo has sent a request for agreement for Deputy Foreign Minister for Multilateral Relations Muhammad Hamoud Bidan to become Ambassador to Egypt, but that this assignment also awaits PM approval. Zebari said a similar situation affects the Iraq's Ambassador to Bahrain who has received Saudi agreement to become Ambassador in Riyadh.

¶2. (C) Zebari added that the MFA has decided to push back on its Arab neighbors that have recently asked to set up missions in Iraq. "The situation is too unsettled at this time," commented Zebari. In addition, Zebari reported that GOI has decided to postpone the Arab League-sponsored National Accord Conference that was tentatively scheduled for mid-February. Zebari said the conference should take place in Baghdad only after the permanent government has formed.

KHALILZAD